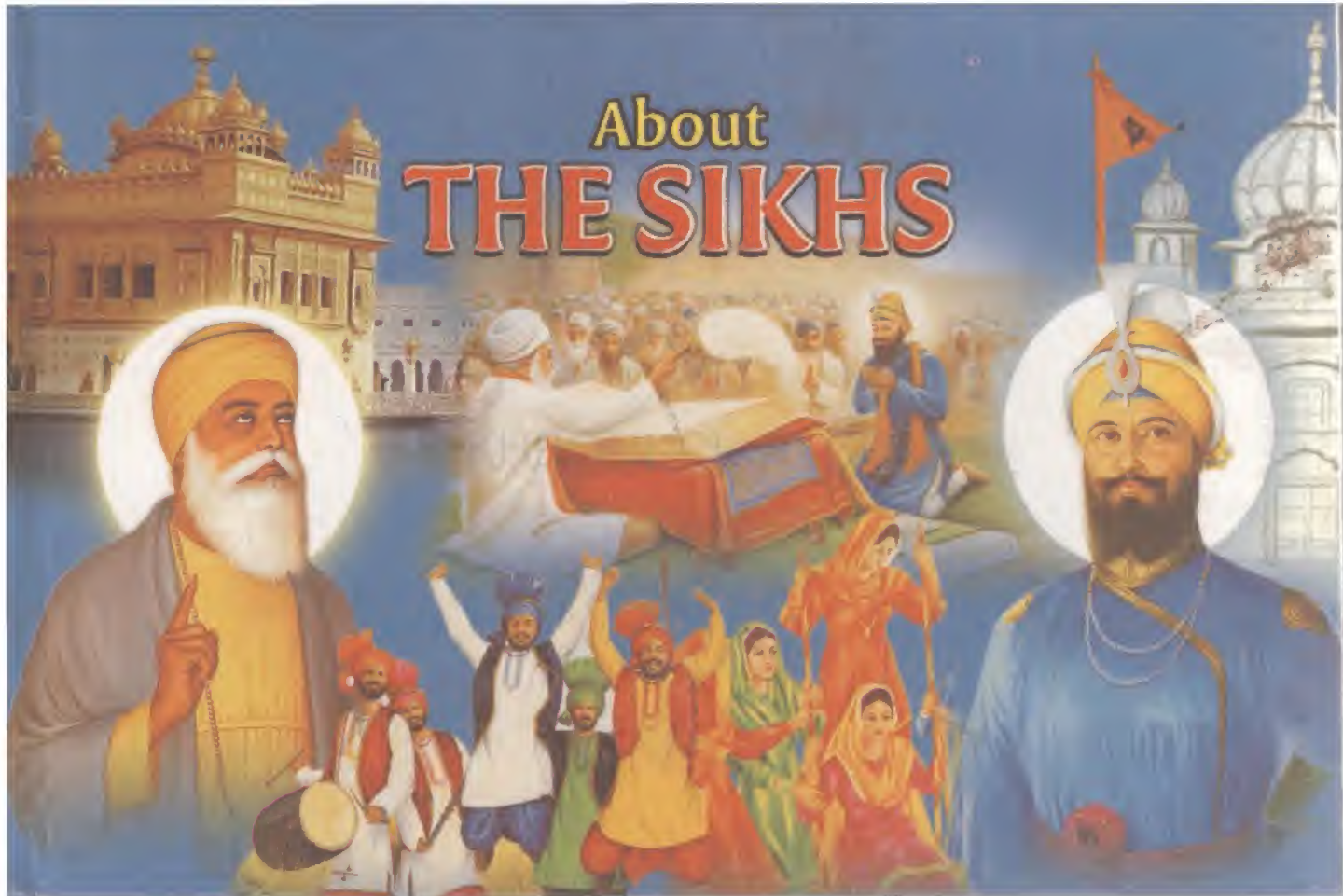


# About **THE SIKHS**



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Pritpal Singh Tuli



**B. Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh**

**Amritsar**

© Publisher

ISBN : 978-93-82289-58-6

First Edition 2013

Price : 100/-



SIKHBOOKCLUB.COM

Published by

**B. Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh**

Bazar Mai Sewan, Amritsar. (India)

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E-mail : csjssales@hotmail.com,

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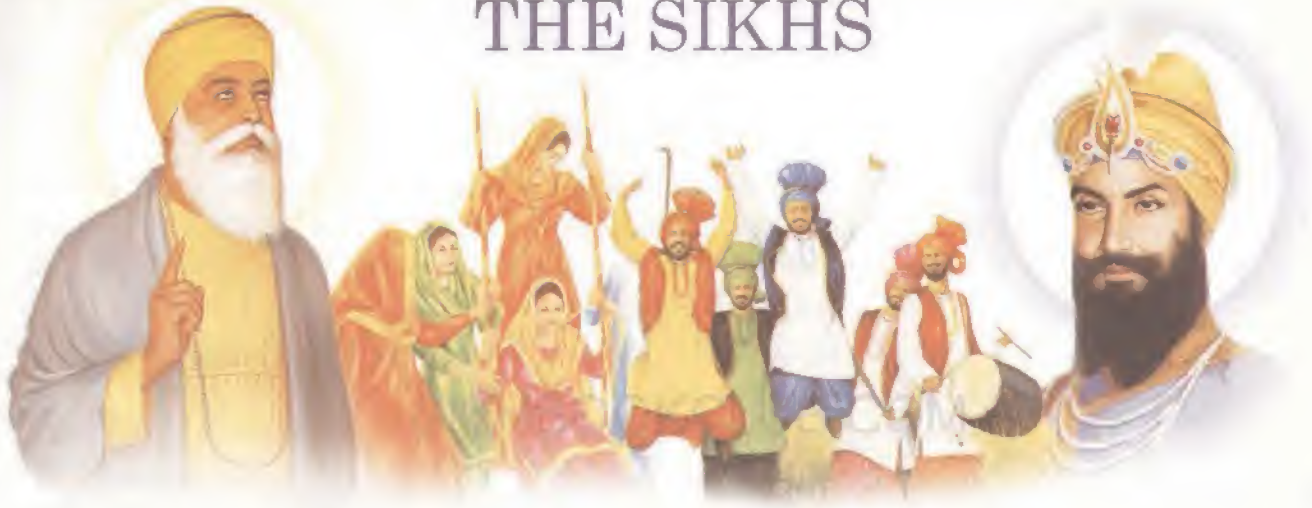
Printed and bound in India by

**Jeewan Printers, Amritsar.**

Ph: 0183-5095774, 2705003

Email: [jiwanprinters@gmail.com](mailto:jiwanprinters@gmail.com)

# THE SIKHS



**G**enerally the meaning of the word 'Sikh' is taken as Shishya, means a learner or disciple. But 'Sikh' has another meaning also. In Pali language 'Sikh' means a person chosen by God for a noble cause. If we penetrate into the intention of the Sikh Gurus to shape a person as a Sikh, and read the 'Khalsa Mahima', the bani of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, we shall find that the most accurate definition of the word 'Sikh' is as given in Pali language. The founder of the Sikh religion was Guru Nanak Dev Ji and final touch was given to it by the tenth master, Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

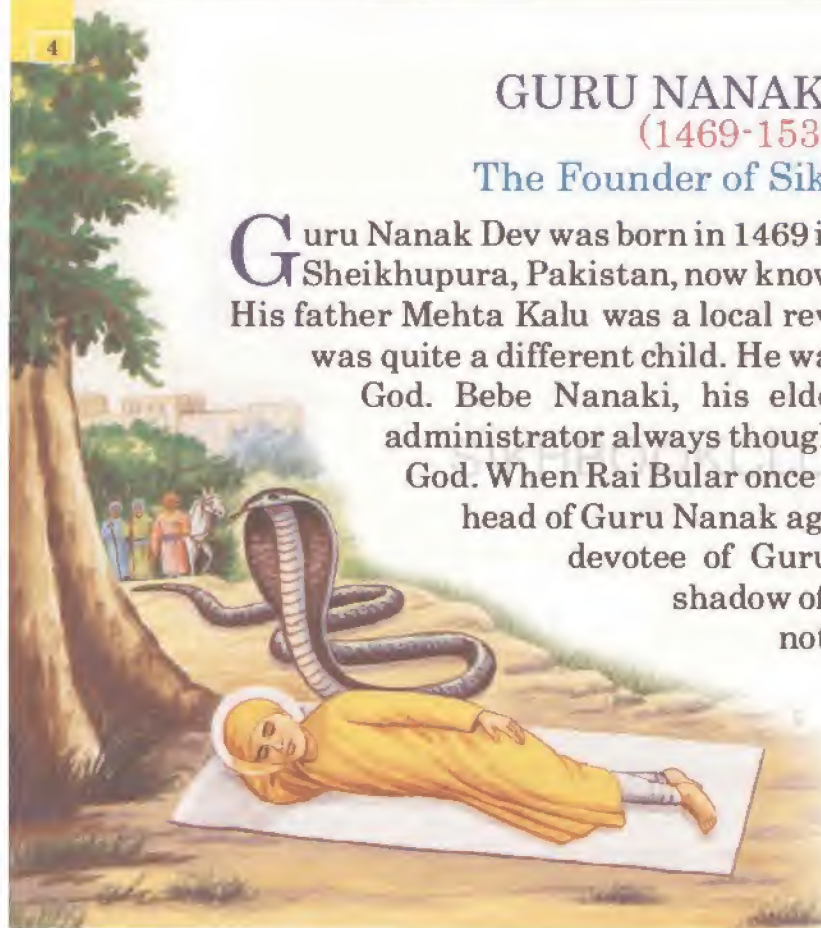


## GURU NANAK DEV JI

(1469-1539)

### The Founder of Sikh Religion

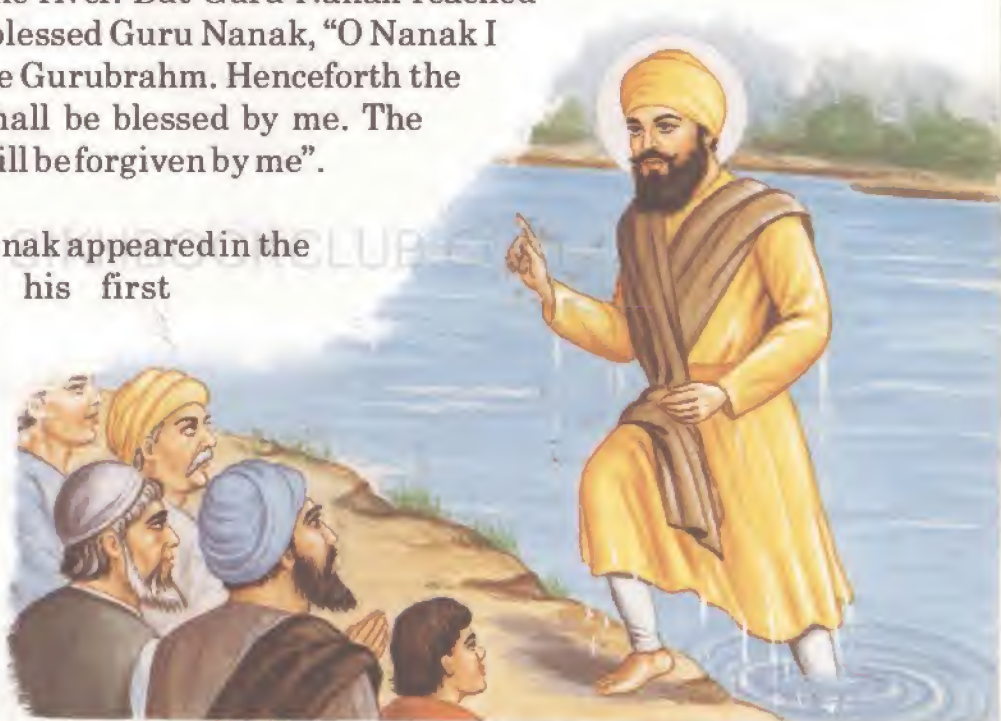
**G**uru Nanak Dev was born in 1469 in Talwandi, a village in the district of Sheikhpura, Pakistan, now known as Nankana Sahib the world over. His father Mehta Kalu was a local revenue officer (Patwari). Guru Nanak was quite a different child. He was generally seen attuned to the Lord God. Bebe Nanaki, his elder sister and Rai Bular, the local administrator always thought the child Nanak an embodiment of God. When Rai Bular once saw a snake making shadow over the head of Guru Nanak against the Sun, he became the earnest devotee of Guru Ji. Once Rai Bular also saw the shadow of a tree, over the head of Guru Nanak, not losing its place, even when the Sun had changed its direction, He fell at the feet of Guru Nanak and for the whole life he revered Guru Nanak as his Khuda (God).



## WHEN GOD BLESSED GURU NANAK

**O**ne day Guru Nanak dived in the local river Baein at Sultanpur Lodhi and disappeared. People thought Guru Nanak has drowned in the river. But Guru Nanak reached at the Court of God. God blessed Guru Nanak, "O Nanak I am Parbrahm and you are Gurubrahm. Henceforth the person blessed by you shall be blessed by me. The person forgiven by you, will be forgiven by me".

After three days Guru Nanak appeared in the village and delivered his first sermon, "No one is Hindu and no one Muslim". Means all are human beings and equal. All people are the children of One and the same God.





## GURU NANAK AT HARIDWAR

**O**ne day Guru Nanak happened to be at Haridwar, a famous pilgrim place of the Hindus. Guru Nanak saw the people offering handfuls of water to the Sun, for the welfare of the souls of their departed relatives. Guru Nanak started throwing water in the opposite direction. On objection of the people Guru Nanak made them understand, "I am giving water to my fields in Punjab. If your water can reach to the Sun or your ancestors who are not on the earth, then why my water can not reach to my fields which are very much on the earth and nearer then the abode of your ancestors?"

The people and Brahmins understood what Guru Nanak meant? They bowed before Guru Nanak and asked for guidance.



## GURU NANAK AT MECCA

Once Guru Nanak happened to be at Mecca. He slept with his legs towards their worship place. In the morning an officer of the mosque, when saw Guru Nanak in this position, he asked, "Why have spread you legs towards the house of God." Guru Nanak simply replied, "O gentleman divert my legs to that direction where God do not happen to be."

He understood the meaning of Guru Nanak's great philosophy that God is pervading everywhere and fell at the feet of Guru Nanak, alongwith other holymen.





## GURU NANAK A WORLD TEACHER

In true sense Guru Nanak alone was the GURU of whole humanity and saviour of the world. He scaled 64000 kms from Ceylon to Rome to guide the strayed people in whole of the world and distributed peace and tranquility to the sick humanity, by his sweet and sacred, Divine Words. Guru Nanak had pain and sympathy for the whole humanity in his bossom and he spent his whole life for the welfare and deliverance from the suffering not only for his own people, or the people of his own state or country but for the people of the whole world. It was famous saying, Nanak was Guru of Hindus and Pir of Muslims.

## TEACHINGS OF GURU NANAK

Few main teachings of Guru Nanak, are as follows:

1. Worship One and only One God, no one other.
2. He is our father and we are all his children.
3. No one is big or low. All are equals irrespective of cast, creed, religion and sex.
4. Give the woman highest regard. She is the mother of kings and prophets.
5. Earn your livelihood with honest means and labor.
6. From your honest earning help the poor and needy.
7. Shed the superstitions, hypocrisy and idol worship.



## GURU NANAK WITH BHAIR LALO AND MALIK BHAGO

During the attack of Babar, Guru Nanak visited his devout Sikh Bhai Lalo, who was lived in Saidpur, now called Eminabad (in Pakistan). Bhai Lalo was a poor carpenter. There also lived a very rich person named as Malik Bhago. Malik Bhago arranged a feast for all the holymen of the city. But Guru Nanak did not attend the feast even on his request. Then he became annoyed and sent his men to bring Guru Nanak. On arrival of Guru Nanak, Malik Bhago put the question as to why he did not attend his grand feast. In reply Guru Ji asked Malik to bring some breads from his house and the same instructions were also given to Bhai Lalo. When breads came from both the sides, Guru Ji held the breads of Bhai Lalo in his right hand and those of Malik Bhago in left hand and squeezed them. People surprised when they saw blood coming out of the sweet breads of Malik Bhago and milk from the course breads of Bhai Lalo. Guru Nanak Made them understand that Bhai Lalo's breads were made from his hard earned money and those of Malik from the money taken from the poors by torturing and exploiting them.







## GURU ANGAD DEV JI

(1504-1552)



**B**efore his merger with God Almighty in 1539 at Kartarpur on the bank of river Ravi, Guru Nanak choosed Bhai Lehna Ji as his successor who came to be known as Guru Angad Dev. He systematized the Punjabi script, which came to be known as Gurmukhi. He started to organise the wrestling camps and play-grounds for his followers alongwith carrying forward the basic teachings of Guru Nanak. Actually he encouraged the games & sports. Once king Humanyu visited Guru Angad Dev, with his sister, and got blessings from Guru Ji.

After attaining Guruship, Guru Angad Dev Ji made Khadur Sahib as his head-quarter.

## GURU AMARDAS JI

(1479-1574)

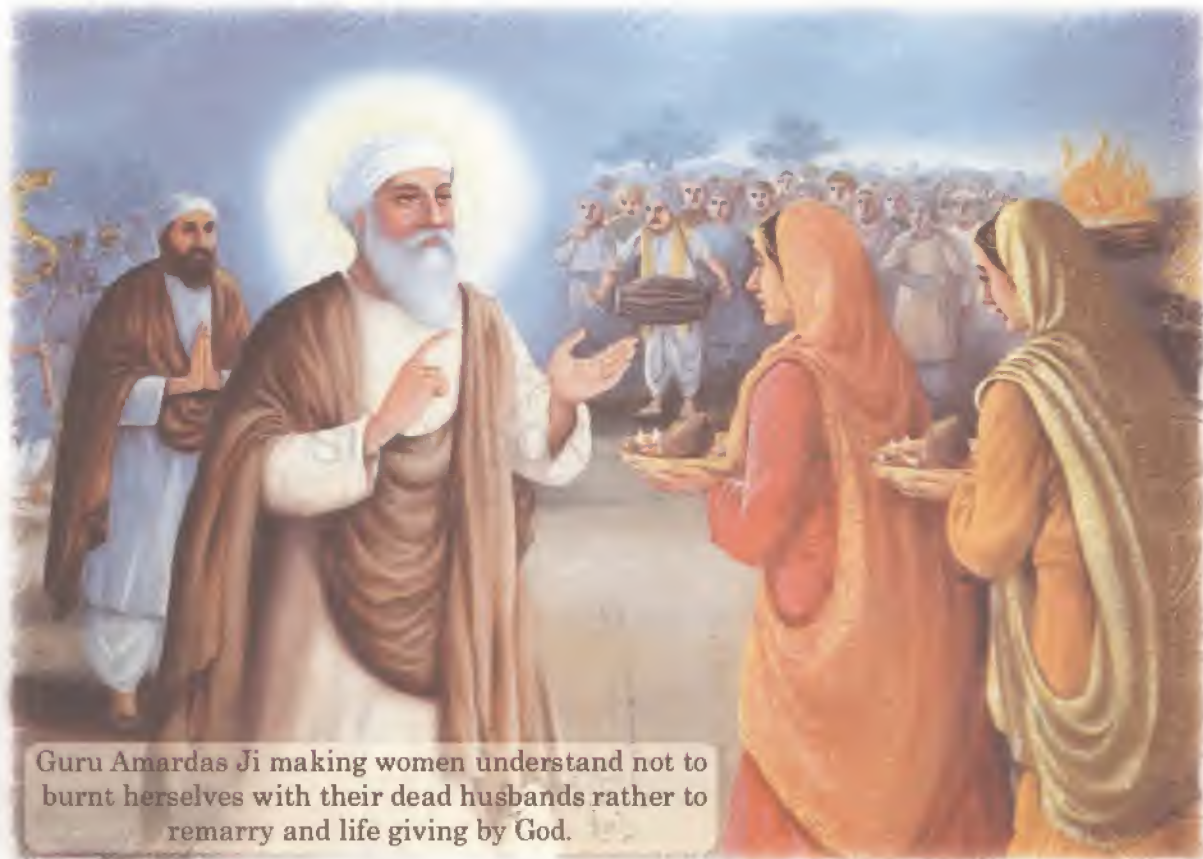
**G**uru Angad Dev Ji choosed Guru Amardas as his successor. Guru Amardas further preached the Sikh tenants as far as possible. He strictly denounced the cruel Sati Pratha (a Hindu custom of wife burnt herself with her dead husband), Parda Pratha (Veil system), untouchability, beating of breast by women on a death, child marriage and Kanya Daan (charity of daughters at the time of marriage) and preached for girl-child education, widow-marriage etc.

Thus he came to be known as the father of social reforms as he was the pioneer in Indian history to nip the social evils.

Guru Amardas made goindwal as his head-quarter. Emperor Akbar visited Guru Amardas and was greatly impressed and on Guru's persuasion stopped collection of Jajiah (tax on religion) from Hindus.







Guru Amardas Ji making women understand not to burnt herself with their dead husbands rather to remarry and life giving by God.

## GURU RAMDAS JI

(1534-1581)

**G**uru Amardas was followed by Guru Ramdas. His previous name was Jetha and he was son-in-law and most devoted disciple of Guru Amardas. Guru Ramdas founded the city of Amritsar and a pious pool of water, in the centre of which later on Harimandar Sahib was built. The Sarovar (pool of water) was called the Amrit-Sarovar (lake of nectar). He took many steps to carry forward the mission of Guru Nanak effectively. He invited all sorts of people of different skills from all over the country to live in the new established city Sri Amritsar. He was an expert of Ragas and introduced many new Rags.



## GURU ARJAN DEV JI

(1563-1606)

**G**uru Ramdas choosed his successor Arjan, the youngest son. Guru Arjan Dev gave Sikh Faith a separate identity. He completed two essentials of a faith. One he compiled the Adi Granth, later to be called as Guru Granth Sahib. Thus he gave scripture to the Sikh religion. Secondly he built Harimandar Sahib, a central place for the Sikh Faith, in the centre of Amrit-Sarovar (pool of nectar), at SriAmritsar.

Guru Arjan Dev was contemporary of Emperor Jahangir, who was very perturbed due to rapid spread of Sikhism. He arrested Guru Ji and tortured to death.

Thus Guru Arjan Dev was the very First martyr of the history of south-east







countries, who sacrificed his life for the sake of truth and justice. Actually Guru Arjan Dev introduced the concept of martyrdom to Indian history. He was made sit on hot iron plate and hot sand was poured on him after this Guru Ji was boiled in the hot water.



## GURU HARGOBIND SAHIB JI

(1595-1644)

After Guru Arjan Dev, his son Hargobind sat on the throne of Guruship, who made a radical change in the setup of Sikh faith. He organized the Sikhs into an army which was the need of the time. Now the Sikhs transformed themselves into an armed organization from being a purely religious organization. He wore two swords one for the spiritual power and second for the temporal power.

He had to fight four battles with the royal forces and won the all. Perhaps his victories were the first victories of the Indians over the foreign rule.



## BATTLES OF GURU HARGOBIND SAHIB

**A**fter organizing Sikhs into an army, which was necessary to fight the tyranny and oppression of Mughal Rulers, Guru Hargobind had to fight four battles with royal forces of Emperor Shahjahan and won all the four. The first battle was fought at Amritsar in 1628. The second battle was fought in 1630 with Abdulla Khan at Shri Hargobindpur and the 3rd one was with Kamberbeg at the site of Gurusar. The last one was fought in 1634 at the site of Kartarpur with Pandey Khan and Kale Khan.

It is to be remembered here that always Guru Ji was attacked by the Mughal forces and he never did first.





## BANDI CHHOR - THE LIBERATOR

When the kingly and military activities of Guru Hargobind Sahib were adversely reported to Emperor Jahangir by Chandu and others, he invited the Guru to see him at Delhi. Guru Ji reached Delhi and met the Emperor. Emperor received Guru Ji with due respect and asked many questions with regard to his spiritual kingship and military preparations. On the answers of Guru Hargobind Sahib, the Emperor became highly satisfied and friendly with the Guru. But Chandu feared for his own security and again initiated the Emperor against Guru Ji. And finally Guru Ji was arrested by the Emperor and kept in Gwalior Fort. After the lapse of one year Jahangir realised the mischief of Chandu and wanted to release Guru Hargobind Sahib. But he refused to come out till all Rajput Kings, who were imprisoned in the fort were also released. Jahangir agreed to release as many of these Kings as could hold on to the Guru's dress. Guru Hargobind Sahib got prepared a special dress having 52 kalis (buds). Thus Guru Ji got freed all the 52 Kings imprisoned in the fort. For this act he is now remembered as 'Bandi Chhor'.





## GURU HAR RAI JI

(1629-1661)

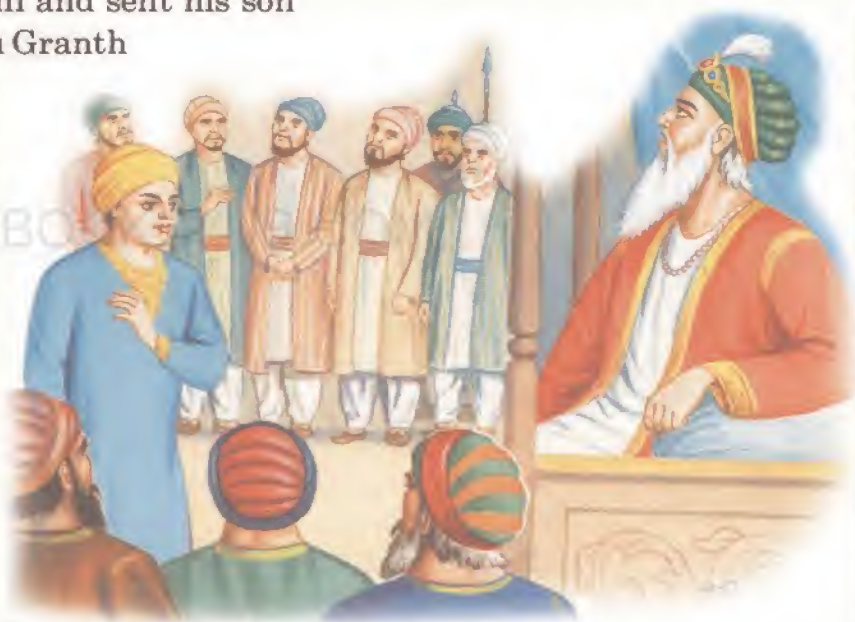
**G**uru Har Rai succeeded Guru Hargobind. Guru Hargobind had later shifted to Kiratpur Sahib and it was remained head-quarter of Guru Har Rai. Here Guru Har Rai always maintained a cavalry of 2200 ready with him. But he had never faced a battle. Though He was attacked thrice by royal forces but as per the blessings of his grandfather Guru Hargobind, all the three Royal Commanders who attacked Guru Har Rai, were killed on the way and could not reach to Kiratpur Sahib.

It was here that Dara Shikoh, the brother of emperor Aurangzeb met Guru Har Rai and got his blessings. Guru Har Rai also established a hospital of herbs, on a large scale at Kiratpur.



## RAM RAI IN THE COURT OF EMPEROR AURANGZEB

**K**nowing about the meeting between Guru Har Rai and Dara Shikoh, Emperor Aurangzeb became annoyed and he summoned Guru Har Rai to his court at Delhi. Guru Ji refused to go Delhi and sent his son Ram Rai, with him a copy of Guru Granth Sahib and ordered to face all the queries of the Emperor fearlessly. But Ram Rai, at one stage, missed deliberately one of the lines (Mitee Musalmaan Kee) from Guru Granth Sahib, as it is said he did so to please Emperor. On hearing this Guru Har Rai expelled his son Ram Rai from Sikh faith, and ordered him not come to Kiratpur to show his face.



## GURU HARKRISHAN JI

(1656-1661)



**A**fter Guru Har Rai, his younger son Harkrishan sat on the Divine Throne of Sikh Faith, at the age of five and was called "Child Guru". But at such a tender age he displayed the spiritual leadership of the highest order. He merged with God Almighty at the age of eight and declared Guru Teg Bahadur as his successor.

## GURU HARKRISHAN JI AT AMBALA

While going to Delhi, Guru Harkrishan camped at village panjokhara, near Ambala.

Seeing child Guru's majesty, one pandit doubted in his mind, "Guru Ji kept his name as Harkrishan, but can he explain Gita?" Inner-knower Guru Ji called the pandit and asked him to bring any person of his choice for the job. He brought a dumb and deaf from the village. Guru



Ji kept a wooden stick on his head and that man started to read and explain Gita.



## GURU TEG BAHADAR JI

(1621-1675)

**T**he conversion of Hindus was at the peak during the reign of Aurangzeb, especially in Kashmir, a great centre of Hindu learning. A delegation of Kashmiri pandits under the leadership of Pandit Kirpa Ram appeared in the court of Guru Teg Bahadar at Anandpur Sahib and pleaded with the Guru for the security of their religion. Guru Teg Bahadar sacrificed his life for the sake of a religion, which was not of his own and in which he did not believe. It was a unique example in the world history. When the world did not heard about the word Human Rights as such, Guru Teg Bahadar made supreme sacrifice for the freedom of faith, worship and expression of everyone on this earth. Therefore, the concept of Human Rights are our gift to world civilization. Had Guru Teg Bahadar not sacrificed his life, India would have gone on the path of either Iran or Egypt.



## GURU GOBIND SINGH JI

(1666-1708)

**G**uru Gobind Singh succeeded his father, Guru Teg Bahadar at the tender age of nine. He was born in 1666 at Patna, when Guru Teg Bahadar was on the tour of Assam. He had four sons. Two elder sons got martyrdom in the battle of Chamkaur Sahib and two younger sons were bricked alive in Sirhind. His valour, courage and statesmanship were unique and unchallenged. He was warrior as well as poet par excellence. He sacrificed all his family members for the sake of truth and justice. Guru Gobind Singh entirely changed the shape of Sikh Faith. He shaped the personality of the Khalsa in such a way that it could fight ever against the tyranny, injustice and oppression. His aim was to create a new unique nation, which he accomplished on 13th April, 1699.



## Guru Gobind Singh demanding the heads of the Sikhs for creation of Khalsa





## CREATION OF KHALSA

**O**n the day of Baisakhi, April 13, 1699 a significant incident, not only of Indian history but of the World-history, took place at Sri Anandpur Sahib, when the Sikhs numbering in about 2,00,000 to 2,50,000 from all over the country assembled there on the summoning of Guru Gobind Singh. Among them he selected Five Beloved Ones and baptized them. The Five Beloved, the first members of the Khalsa Brotherhood, belonged to different castes and different places of the country. We call them "Panj Pyare" Khalsa word has double meaning. In Sanskrit its meaning is Pure and in Persian, the one related to the supreme authority in a region. Yes, Khalsa is pure and has direct connection with the God Almighty, the Supreme Authority of Universes. After baptizing Panj Pyare Guru Ji himself got baptized by them and became the member of Khalsa Brotherhood.



## FIGHT AGAINST INJUSTICE

**G**uru Gobind Singh and his Khalsa continued their struggle against the injustice of the rulers of the time. Guru Gobind Singh fought 14 battles, during his short span of life, some with Hindu hill Rajas, some with Mughal royal forces and some with combined Hindu and Muslim forces. Guru Gobind Singh was a storm for the rulers of the time. Guru Ji did a miraculous job as he transformed the Sikhs from

being a spiritual and pious community into fierce fighters.

The last battle of Anandpur proved crucial as it led to division of the family members at the bank of river Sarsa and finally resulted in the martyrdom of four sons of Guru Ji.



## GURUSHIP TO GURU GRANTH SAHIB

**A**t the time of leaving for heavenly abode, at Nanded (Maharashtra) in 1708, Guru Gobind Singh surrendered guruship before Guru Granth Sahib and appointed Guru Granth Sahib as the eleventh Guru of the Sikh faith. He had instructed the Sikhs, that henceforth there would be no Guru with a human body. Only Guru Granth Sahib was to be referred for all religious and spiritual matters.

Dohra, "When God ordered I created the Khalsa Panth and I instruct all the Sikhs to recognise Sri Guru Granth Sahib as their Guru." Guru Gobind Singh.





## BATTLE OF CHAMKAUR SAHIB

**T**his battle was fought on Dec. 22, 1704 at the site of Chamkaur Sahib by two elder sons Baba Ajit Singh of 17 years and Baba Jujhar Singh of 14, of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. After leaving Anandpur for when Guru Gobind Singh crossed river Sarsa and took refuge in a small fortress at Chamkaur Sahib, he was left only with two elder sons and only 40 Sikhs. Here he was encircled by Royal forces and hill Raja's forces estimated to be around ten lakhs. Guru ji sent his two sons turn by turn to fight with the forces. They fought against all odds with magnificent and dauntless courage and outstanding dash with the well-equipped and well-trained army. This battle has a mention in the First ten most heroic and unequelled battles of the world. In this war Guru Ji himself killed General Nahar Khan, General Gairat Khan and injured another General Khawaja Mohd. of the Mughal Army. This battle was also described by Guru Gobind Singh Ji himself in his Zaffarnama (letter of victory) to Emperor Aurangzeb.



## THE MOST TRAGIC AND UNPARALLELED SACRIFICE

**T**he most tragic sacrifice in the name of God, in human history took place on Dec. 27, 1704 when two younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Master, named Baba Zorawar Singh and Baba Fateh Singh of eight and five years respectively were bricked alive in Sirhind by Wazir Khan, The Governor of Sirhind, when they refused to be converted to Islam. This was the most daring sacrifice in the world history as the children of 8 and 5 were never heard and read, opting to death voluntarily, leaving aside the allurements of laurels, for the sake of Truth, Justice and Freedom of faith. The two famous poets beautifully describes about the martyrdom as follows.

“This is only but one pilgrim place in India, where a father had allowed to be killed his two sons in the name of God”. (Allah Yaar Khan)

“The children of which race or nation can opt martyrdom in such a way, its present may be of any type, but future is great.” (National Poet Maithili Sharan Gupta)





## BABA BANDA SINGH BAHADAR

(1670-1716)

**A**fter Guru Gobind Singh, a great warrior and a devout Sikh, Baba Banda Singh Bahadar took the mission in his hand, on the instructions of Guru Ji. He made the first bid to establish the Khalsa Raj and continued it for four years. Had the Sikhs not divided at his time, The Khalsa could have achieved much more and much earlier than Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the history of Indian subcontinent would have been otherwise. Baba Banda Singh Bahadar killed the executioners of Guru Teg Bahadar, the younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh and Pir Budhu Shah, and finally the Wazir Khan, the Subedar of Sirhind in 1710 and established the Sikh Raj. At the end he was captured by the



Mughal forces and tortured to death with his four year's son Ajay Singh and 740 his army-men, the Sikhs.

Rabinder Nath Tagore gave a warm tribute to Baba Ji in his poem titled "Banda Bir" in Bengali, which became the anthem for the revolutionaries of Bengal during Indian Freedom Struggle. He was the First in the history who abolished the "Zamindary system" and distributed the land to actual cultivators, thus emerged as a great reformer.





## BABA DEEP SINGH JI SHAHEED

(1682-1757)

**B**aba Deep Singh was born in Village Pahuwind of District Amritsar on Jan. 26, 1682. In the young age he visited Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur Sahib with his parents and then did not return back. He took Amrit and started a new life at the feet of Guru Gobind Singh in Anandpur. There Baba Ji took proper education of Gurbani and its meanings and also got military training. After the demise of Guru Gobind Singh when Baba Banda Singh Bahadar raided Punjab, he was helped by Baba Deep Singh in many of his campaigns.

In 1757, The vice chief of Lahore province Jahan Khan raided Amritsar, destroyed the fort of Ramrauni and filled the Sarovar of Harimandar Sahib with the debris of it. When this news reached to Sikhs, they gathered and stormed Amritsar. In a face to face combat with Jahan Khan, Baba Deep Singh got a deep injury on his neck, but with the blessings of Guru ji, he started to fight with Khanda in one hand and supporting his head with the other hand, frustrated the enemy. Thus he freed Harimandar Sahib from the clutches of the enemy and got martyrdom in the Parikarma of Harimandar Sahib where his memorial is situated.



# MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH

(1780-1839)

**M**aharaja Ranjit Singh was the last sovereign of India who reversed the tides of history and shaped international boundaries of present day four countries. He created a vast Sikh Empire with its capital at Lahore (Now in Pakistan). He raised India's most powerful fighting force equivalent to entire British Indian Army at the time of 2nd world war in 1939. If to-day the Kashmir is with India and Peshawar is with Pakistan, it is by virtue of Sikh Kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He abolished the death sentence. As per Prof. Himadri Benerji Maharaja was one of the greatest nineteenth century personalities, who restored the lost Hindu Glory in India after the lapse of one thousand years. He was one the greatest military strategist's and statesmen of his time and an astute diplomat. He was secular in true sense.



## THE GOLDEN TEMPLE

**H**arimandar Sahib known as Golden Temple all over the world, is a central place of the Sikh faith. Guru Arjan Dev Ji got its foundation laid by Sain Mian Mir, a Muslim saint. After being ruined by Afgan invader Ahmed Shah Abdali, it was rebuilt in its present shape by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It is the alone worship place on the earth after the Name of God where the Almighty is sung and praised day and night with devotion and dedication. In the sanctum sanctorum Sri Guru Granth Sahib, The Last, Final and Ultimate revelation of God is installed. Golden Temple is situated in the centre of a pool of nectar each side of which is about 150 meter long. It is connected with the Parkarma (causeway) with 60 meters long bridge. It has four doors, which signifies that any person belonging to any cast, any religion, any country is allowed here.

What Mecca is to Muslims and Jerusalem to Christians, Amritsar is to the Sikhs and bulk of Hindus. Its spirituality blended with cleanliness, beauty, holiness, art and architecture is unique and par excellence.

A Renowned Indian poet Rabinder Nath Tagore has said in a poem on Golden Temple that a piece of heaven has come down on the earth.







## THE AKAL TAKHAT

Guru Hargobind Ji established the Akal Takhat, the temporal seat of the Sikh Faith. Akal means God and Takhat means throne. The building of the Akal Takhat was made just opposite of Sri Harimandar Sahib in the same complex. There are total five Takhats of Sikh faith in India. Out of those, Akal Takhat is most important. Guru Hargobind used to sit on the Akal Takhat everyday after the finish of programme at Harimandar Sahib and take political decisions there.

The structure of Akal Takhat is situated at such a angle, that if you sit at Akal Takhat, you can see Harimandar Sahib and if you sit in Harimandar Sahib you can not see Sri Akal Takhat Sahib. It means the religion in true sense is supreme.

## INSTITUTION OF LANGAR

**L**angar (free kitchen) is one of the main and important institutions of the Sikh religion, where a needy and hungry person can have meal without discrimination of cast, creed, religion, sex etc. The institution was established by Guru Nanak the First Master of the Sikhs and further strengthened by all Sikh Gurus. Its main purpose was to make available food for the needy and to eradicate the untouchability based on the caste system and religion.





## THE GURDWARA

The worship place of the Sikhs is called Gurdwara. The Shabad Guru, Sri Guru Granth Sahib is installed in the centre of the building, before whom the devotees bow their heads with adoration. Katha and Kirtan of the divine hymns from Sri Guru Granth Sahib are performed daily. In almost all the Gurdwaras a hungry can have food and place for night staying.



### Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh

This salutation was introduced by Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Master of The Sikhs. It means Khalsa belongs to God and victory alone belongs to God.

### Nishan Sahib

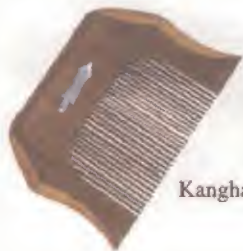
It is essential for all the gurdwaras to display and fly the Nishan Sahib, a yellow (Saffron) triangular flag bearing the Sikh symbol of Khanda in blue colour in the centre.

## The Five 'K's

The five 'K's means five Kakaars, made essential by Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji for every Sikh to be Worn. The five 'K's are as follows.

1. Kesh (uncut hair)
2. Kangha (comb to clean the hairs)
3. Kara (a metal wristband)
4. Kirpaan (sword for the defence)
5. Kachhehra (undergarment short)

These five symbols have become an identity of a Baptised Sikh.



Kangha



Kara

Kesh



Kirpaan

Kachhehra

## Singh and Kaur

**T**hese are two surnames given by Guru Gobind Singh Ji to Sikhs. 'Singh' means lion and 'Kaur' means princess lioness. The male Sikh names are suffixed by Singh and female Sikh names are suffixed by Kaur. These two surnames also helped in removing the barriers of caste.

## Baisakhi

**B**aisakhi is one of the main festivals celebrated by the Sikhs. On this day Guru Gobind Singh had created Khalsa Panth. Special programmes are held in Gurdwaras on this day. Langars (free kitchen) are also arranged. People take part in great numbers.





## SIKHS IN THE MODERN AGE



Giani Zail Singh  
Former President of India



Dr. Manmohan Singh  
Prime Minister of India



S. Parkash Singh Badal  
Chief Minister of Punjab



General Bikram Singh  
Chief of Indian Army



Panth Rattan  
Giani Sant Singh Ji Maskeen



Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia  
Chairman  
Planning Commission of India



S. Hardip Singh Puri  
Permanent Representative of India  
to the United Nations



S. Sant Singh Chatwal  
Indian-American Businessman

Sikhs had much more contribution to Indian Freedom Struggle in comparison to their percentage of population. Being merely 2.2 percent of India's population at that time, Sikhs' contribution was more than 75%. Even after independence. Sikhs gave India its (India's) best Army Generals, Athletes, Economists, Engineers, Strategists, Adventurers etc. and played outstanding role in shaping India in every field. Sikhs are vallant in battle, zestful in life and fearless in death and progressive.

## THE ESSENCE OF SIKHISM



**S**ikhism is a very practical and progressive religion. It has a universal message for whole the world. It's essence is to believe in One and only One Supreme Reality, the Creator of universe and it's sole message to all the human beings, is be a good human, does not matter in which religion you are born or having faith, but be a good human and put your excellent contribution to make this world, the abode of God, a beautiful garden.